

Regional Interoperability Advisory Board Meeting
August 17, 2005
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Buffalo County/City of Kearney Law Enforcement Facility

Meeting Notes

Attendees: Mark Conrey, Al Berndt, Todd Beam, Ted Blume, Jayne Scofield, Mike Jeffres, Major Bill Hobbs, Tim Loewenstein, Neil Miller

Absent: Bob Brower, Ted Blume

1) Recognition of chair and vice-chair of board

- Todd Beam, Chair
- Tim Loewenstein, Vice-Chair
- Chair and Vice-Chair will serve on a six month rotating basis with all local representatives serving as Chair and Vice-Chair over the course of the next two years.

2) Discussion of LB 343

- Mission of board is outlined in LB 343: "shall provide advice to the division regarding the formation, expansion and enhancement of regional communication systems to achieve interoperability"
- Goals and objectives of Board must be determined taking an all hazards approach with operational requirements in mind. The capability of communications is available; it is the operational side that needs to be defined. Must keep in mind that interoperable communications is on the command level. Goals and objectives must identify a path for the regions to follow.
- Board will develop communications strategy/plan by end of year.
- Incentives for counties to regionalize are non-monetary and include facilitation, guidance and technical advice on communications systems.

3) Development of Regions

- Counties formed together on their own with DOC's guidance. Some regions took form via emergency management regions. These regions are fluid. Regions may be changed based on population, risk and communications capabilities. State statute articulates that each county needs a LEOP.
- DOC conversations with regions have been positive. Regions do seek guidance from the State and ask where the State is going. Regions are confident in their decisions and are taking ownership of their communications systems. Regions are more aware of the communications systems surrounding them. The available grant funding has pushed counties to prioritize their needs. Board must be brought up to speed on what is occurring in each county/region.
- NSP would like to patch to each region due to cost restraints of purchasing new equipment for each troop area.

4) Overview of current Regions

- Rural and urban areas are very different. 800 MHz trunked systems only seen in Douglas County/Omaha area, Sarpy County, Lincoln/Lancaster and Dakota County, Woodbury County, IA.
- North of I-80 is VHF primarily. Connectivity issues in Region 26 and Keith County.
- CNRI I & CNRI II is a mix of UHF & VHF conventional.
- Lincoln/Lancaster is expanding 800 MHz into surrounding counties through a COPS grant.
- Southeast counties are discussing 800 MHz.
- Northeast counties are moving out of low band. Tribal areas being considered. Dakota County part of FEMA award to do a tri-state interop communications system.
- Adjacent states' business does influence Nebraska. South Dakota's digital system does impact what equipment is purchased along the border. Wyoming is going VHF P25. Colorado has not expanded their 800 MHz system to the eastern side of state. Southern counties do interact with Kansas' fire districts, which are VHF/UHF. The State of Kansas is going 800 MHz.

5) Interop Pilot Project

- Goal is to show interop between locals and State. How workable is this in a car? What are the incremental costs?
- Stage 1 to be completed with existing infrastructure: VHF channel, FutureCom vehicular repeater and a portable radio.
- Stage 2 will involve NSP and possibly NGPC. Equipment placed in vehicles and coverage explored.
- Further items to consider: P25 and encryption. Cost issues. Current load of NSP's vehicles. Low band capabilities. Data.
- Project to be completed in September and October, 2005.

6) Board's expenses

- The Public Safety Communications Fund currently has no money available. All expenses should be held onto until further notice.

7) Prior to next meeting:

- Goals and objectives will be considered by board members. The goals and objectives are tight statements and may be questions yet to be answered.
- Consideration of the November 2004 State Strategy as a working document. What needs to be considered? Updated? Revised? Should the State's plan derive from this document, or should the plan start from scratch? Must consider the Federal, State and local jurisdictions when considering the plan. Must be mindful of encouraging and guiding the counties, rather than dictating.
- Obtain communication information from LEOPs.
- Summarize regional systems via:
 - Day to day business of intra-operability and inter-operability
 - Where is each county today? Future plans?
 - Identify transient needs. Who needs communications capabilities in outside counties? Some counties are donors and some are receivers of communications systems.

- What county leads the region?
- Label regions A-Z.
- Next meeting is at 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, September 7, 2005 at the Lincoln Police Department, Lincoln Nebraska.